Package for farmers of Bundelkhand and Chhattisgarh

1576. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether farmers have submitted their demands to the Prime Minister and he had assured to take action on the demands;

(b) if so, what kind of relief is being envisaged by his Ministry and the kind of package Government is going to give to the farmers of Bundelkhand in UP and Chhattisgarh;

(c) how many farmers will be benefited by this package particularly farmers of the Bundelkhand;

(d) whether his Ministry has taken up the issue of reduction of tax on diesel used by farmers; and

(e) if so, the details of all initiative and visible changes in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) The Government of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh and some public representatives requested for study of the drought like conditions in the Bundelkhand areas and some tehsils in Allahabad district of Uttar Pradesh and provision of Central assistance to tackle the situation. An Inter-Ministerial Central Study Team visited the Bundelkhand areas and some tehsils in Allahabad district of Uttar Pradesh in the 4th week of January, 2008 and the Bundelkhand areas of Madhya Pradesh, to study the drought like situation in these areas with a view to assessing the ground situation and the scale of implementation of various medium-term and long-term drought mitigation programmes/ schemes and to recommend strategy and various measures that are required for agriculture development suitable for the areas to ameliorate the current situation. Further action would be taken after receipt of the Team's report.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Question does not arise.

Recommendations of Prof. Radhakrishna Committee

1577. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the specific recommendations of Prof. Radhakrishna report on agriculture indebtedness recently received by Government and Government's reaction to each of the recommendations; and

(b) by when these are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The Government had appointed an Expert Group on

Agricultural Indebtedness under the Chairmanship of Prof.R. Radhakrishna. The Expert Group has pointed out that the underlying causes of agricultural indebtedness are stagnation in agriculture, production and marketing risks, institutional vacuum and lack of alternative livelihood opportunities in term of off-farm employment. The recommendations of the Expert Group can be categorized under the following five major heads:

(i) Immediate Credit Measures

(ii) Financial Architecture

(iii) Institutional Architecture

(iv) Risk Mitigation Measures

(v) Other Measures

2. The Expert Group has, *inter alia*, recommended re-schedulement of loans and waiver of interest in case of farmers affected by natural calamities and crop failure in case of rainfed areas with interest waiver to be shared by the Central and State Governments. The report of the Expert Group is in the public domain.

3. A scheme of debt waiver and debt relief for farmers has been announced by the Government in the Union Budget for 2008-09. The total value of overdue loans being waived is estimated at Rs. 50,000 crore and the One Time Settlement (OTS) relief on the overdue loans is estimated at Rs. 10,000 crore.

Climatic condition in Jharkhand for growing wheat

1578. MS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Jharkhand State has the critical component of excellent weather to grow the wheat;

(b) whether Government has plan to encourage the tribal farmers to grow wheat in the State;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Cool and dry climatic conditions, soil texture and structure are, in general, suitable for wheat cultivation in the State. However, sometimes high temperature in last week of February to first week of March affects the flowering adversely. The major constraint in wheat production is the scarce availability of water for irrigation due to very less rainfall during October to February-March (20-30 mm per months) and very low irrigation potential (11-12 per cent only). Overall conditions barring water availability is suitable for wheat cultivation in the State.